

GIFT OF INTERPRETATION OF TONGUES

What is it?

- The gift of Interpretation of tongues is one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit that actually works hand in hand with another gift. That gift is the gift of speaking in other tongues.
- The interpretation of tongues is the supernatural ability to interpret the gift of speaking in tongues into a language we can understand. This gift works with the gift of diverse tongues. It does not work on its own.
 - o In actuality, most gifts work in a combination between gifts.
- Because this gift has to do with interpretation this means it's done orally. This gift is vocal gift, just like speaking in tongues.
- The gift of interpretation is not translation. The gift of interpretation may be expressed differently from one person to the next in the congregation. Although this may be true, the essence and deep root of the message will be similar – the phrasing of it will be different because this gift doesn't function as word-by-word translation.
 - o Translation is an exact rendering from one language to another in precise grammatical terms, where an interpretation reveals what God wants us to know.
 - o This explains why many times a message in tongues and the interpretation that follows are not always the same length. (Daniel)
 - o The interpretation is subject to being judged because many times it is in our words, and we use our own familiar phrases and vocabulary.
- The interpretation of tongues can come in two forms: the interpreter speaks the words through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, or he/she sees what is being spoken in the form of a vision.
- The interpretation of tongues requires a measure of faith. The interpreter normally receives only one or two words at a time; they usually do not receive the complete message at once. By faith they must give those words; and by giving those words, God gives them the next words. As they speak the message will continue to come a few words at a time until they are finished. Even if the message lasts 30 min, the interpreter usually only gets a few words at a time.

What is it not?

- A polyglot is someone who knows multiple languages. This ability is usually learned even though some pick up languages easily.
- If someone is speaking in tongues and you hear them and it's in a language you know naturally and you are able to understand it. That is not the gift of interpretation of tongues.
 - o For example I know English and Spanish. If I'm at church in another country and someone starts praying in tongues, and God uses one of those languages. I will understand it, but this isn't the gift of interpretation of tongues because I already know those languages – it's not supernatural.

- We see this happening in Acts 2 when the 120 left the upper room speaking in tongues. People heard their languages being spoken by people who would never know the language – but in this case, the gift wasn't in the hearing, it was in the speaking – they spoke in tongues.
 - It's not part of the gift of interpretation, but if it happens it's really cool! You get to witness and understand what God is saying through someone. And God can and will use that! But that falls more into the gift of speaking in tongues.
- Jackie Pullinger a missionary to Hong Kong has some amazing testimonies in Chasing the Dragon of Chinese Christians praying and they start speaking in tongues and it's perfect English!
- It is not the function of the human mind. It is the functioning of the Holy Spirit through the mind. The interpreter does not understand the language or tongue that h/she is interpreting. The person's mental faculties are not a part of the message, so he has no thought in his mind as to what the Spirit is going to say. It is the Spirit who puts the message in that person's mind.

Purpose:

- The interpretation of tongues in combination with the gift of speaking in tongues is equal to prophesy because it reveals the heart and will of the Lord – except for it is given in the context of unbelief, stubbornness, or rebellion among the church, as we discussed in our study on the gift of tongues.
- Therefore it is for the edification, exhortation, and comfort of the church.
- Even though the Gift of Tongues in combination with the Gift of Interpretation of Tongues has a horizontal dimension, its purpose is to lead the church to a vertical response. Usually praise, worship and repentance more readily follow the gift of tongues and interpretation than it does the gift of prophecy. – Prophecy is usually more instructional, where tongues and interpretation invite us to a more worshipful response.

Biblical Examples:

- We don't see a lot of examples of the gift of interpretation and this could be because people didn't write down the interpretations or they used to word prophecy instead to describe the utterance.
- Either way we can learn a lot about the gift in 1 Corinthians 12-14.
 - 12:10 / 14:5 / 14:13 / 14:26-27
- There is one instance in the Old Testament where we see an unknown tongue being interpreted spiritually and that is in the book of Daniel. – Daniel 5:13-29